

Project Update: July 2023

Six plant species were chosen for propagation and ex-situ conservation based on endemism, levels of conservation status and its location proximity to the two botanic gardens in this project. These include *Dombeya longebracteolata*, *Hibiscus boranensis* which were chosen to be propagated and conserved in Dilla University Botanical and Eco-tourism Garden (DUBEG). The remaining four species *Vernonia tewoldei*, *Euphorbia baleensis*, *Polyscias farinosa*, and *Dombeya kefaensis*, which are expected to be found in Bale and Keffa floristic Regions, are chosen to be propagated and conserved in Gullele Botanic Garden (GBG).

1. Site and Nursery preparations in DUBEG



Plate 1. Site clearance and preparation



Plate 2: Providing information for the nursery workers on nursery activities for the project work.



Plate 3. Preparation of soil, sand and compost in polyethylene bags



Plate 4. Prepared polybags reserved for plant materials of the proposed species in the project (DUBEG Team, Tariku Berihun (left) and Muluken Tadele (right)). In this photo, most of the polybags are with plant materials germinating and some others reserved for the project.

2. Fieldwork

We conducted three collection trips to different parts of the country and our stays in the field was shorter than we planned to stay due to various reasons. Because of unpredictable security issues in different parts of Oromia and some areas of southern nation nationalities and peoples' region, the field works conducted for searching plant materials of the required species in the dense forests were not as successful as expected.

2.1. Plant materials collection fieldwork for *Dombeya longebracteolata*, *Dombeya kefaensis*,

The team has made field assessments for these species on the way from AA → Hawassa → Soddo → Arbaminch → Konso. Very specifically, we have assessed to find the species in the Humbo Assisted Natural Regeneration Project Forest, which is relatively very similar in structure to the Combretum-Terminalia woodland, where the type specimens of the species were first recorded. However, we were not successful in finding the plant as well as the plant materials of both species. We agreed that further assessment is required for these species in other similar areas. Some of the photos taken during the field to different parts of the country are indicated below.



Plate 5. Project leader in the forest searching for the plant species.



Plate 6: Collection Team around Humbo assisted natural regeneration forest, Wolayta Zone, Southern Ethiopia.

2.2. Plant materials collection for *Polyscias farinosa*

The team has moved to the former shewa region, particularly to the way from Addis Ababa to Debre-Birhan to Ankober for the collection of plant materials of this species. However, we failed to find the plant itself and plant materials for this species.

2.3. Plant materials collection for *Polyscias farinosa*

The team has also moved from Addis Ababa to Ambo through Chilimo forest and up to Wonchi forest around Wonchi Crater Lake searching for the aforementioned species. Still the fieldwork was not promising.



Plate 6. Project leader looking for the species around Ankober, North Shewa Zone, Amhara Region.



Plate 7. Wonchi forest is around wonchi crater lake.



Plate 8. Wonchi Crater Lake, the forest encircles the lake, and is where we visited for collections.

Therefore, we have extended our project schedule and planned to continue our fieldwork until we get some of the plant materials for the proposed species. Although it is unpredictable, we hope that the security issues will be better as there are many political efforts taking place by different bodies to settle the problems in Ethiopia.

Note: As a project leader, I would like to ask taxonomists, botanists or professionals of related discipline in the world who have come across any of these plant species (Ethiopian endemic) and if you have any data, please contact me in the email addressed above. Thank you!

The Rufford Foundation: Thank you very much for funding and working with us. I always appreciate the effort of this foundation in supporting smaller projects of developing world but with bigger benefits for the people of this world.